The 2\textsuperscript{nd} CILIP ARLG Study Conference

“The final frontier – to boldly go where you have never been before”

University of Sussex 23\textsuperscript{rd} – 25\textsuperscript{th} June 2014

Attendee: Annmarie Lee, Liaison Librarian, Birmingham City University

First to express my gratitude to ARLG West Midlands for awarding me a bursary, to attend the 2\textsuperscript{nd} CILIP ARLG Study conference.

The theme of the conference was “The final frontier – to boldly go where you have never been before”. An appropriate title for me as a first time ARLG conference attendee and a fairly novice conference delegate overall.

Inevitably the star trek theme ran throughout the conference with a few Mr. Spock pictures, vulcan salutes and “beam me up” references, which all added to the appeal of the proceedings.

My general impression of the conference was very positive. The facilities were excellent, with free wifi allowing me to tweet throughout (ARLG storify); the refreshments were abundant and delicious, and the conference was extremely engaging and thought-provoking.

The conference format included keynote presentations, lightening sessions for suppliers, and an array of workshops covering current and relevant topics.

Breaks and lunch time provided a good opportunity for networking and it was lovely to meet so many people in different roles and from various institutions.

The key topics were developing new and shared spaces, collaborations and partnerships and facing the future in terms of the profession and services, all of which are pertinent to my current role as Enquiry Services librarian and with the imminent build of a new library occurring at my place of work.

\textbf{Day One:}

Day One started with an ardent talk by Jon Purcell, University Librarian at Durham University, on fore fronting student experience, partnerships, contributing to the institutional reputation, external engagement, scenario planning and future proofing.

The most refreshing aspect of all was his admission that despite his involvement with all this, ultimately he misses the direct interaction with students. A sentiment I'm sure a lot of us in the profession can relate to and one that Jon tries to rectify through offering impromptu and informal drop in sessions to gain student feedback.

As Jon eloquently conveyed, sometimes we have to “Stop starting and start stopping”.


Examples of Durham’s scenario planning technique were particularly enlightening. A simple technique of looking at what services or developments are most likely to happen, what aren’t likely to happen and which ones need to stop.

As Jon reiterated "Doing the same (the status quo) is not an option". This seemed to be the running theme throughout the conference.

To boldly go...stretching the envelope and making us indispensable. Jon Purcell, Durham University Library

Workshop highlights on day one included an excellent talk by Ann Middleton from Newcastle University on their use of LibAnswers for their virtual enquiry service. Key concepts included extended 24/7 chat service via an initiative known as “The Northern Collaboration”, consisting of 27 libraries providing help around the clock’, staff buy-in to using RefAnalytics for all enquiry recording and the promotion of the chat service by distributing tea bags! (Tea and a chat?)

Carrying on the theme of promotion was Anglia Ruskin’s workshop on Open Days: Give us your money! By collaborating with central services like marketing, they ensured a more distinct library promotion. Through close alignment with the University initiatives, the team was able to negotiate for the library to be at the end of the tours rather than a “whistle stop” in the middle, offer scheduled and drop in tours and tie in with the University’s social media agenda. Initiatives included a rolling Prezi presentation and balloons at the library entrance, engaging roll up banners, professional publicity shots of popular library features like study spaces and the DVD collection, videos of
staff and students talking about how the library has helped them and a feedback survey for iPads to capture on-the-day responses.

Example survey question used at Open days: Give us your money. Anglia Ruskin University.

Day Two:

Madeleine Lefebvre, Chief Librarian, Ryerson University, Toronto was equally inspiring on day two with her visionary showcase of the new university library development. A gleaming example of innovation, creativity and discovery beyond the classroom (and behind Sam's Record shop as she remarked)

A particularly liked the themed library floors especially the beach theme but also the dynamic use of space with concepts like a mobile welcome desk and a digital media floor. Some key phrases of wisdom from Madeleine when considering new developments:

“Strategic planning is better than a strategic plan” and “diversity drives innovation”.

Madeleine’s concluding message emphasized the need for engagement with all stakeholders throughout the process and advocated the use of the tool Soapbox to gain feedback. [Www.soapboxhq.com](http://Www.soapboxhq.com)

As a dense urban environment, the importance of integrating with the City agenda, changing perceptions and highlighting the cultural resources at hand, led to the
development of an app based on what the project called “the library mile”. 
http://apps.library.ryerson.ca/stclair

In the second keynote of day two, Paul Jeorrett from Glyndwr University was particularly entertaining with his outlook on the evolving profession and how we need to rise to the challenges. His call for an audience rendition of the Dewey song to the tune of Frere Jacques was a welcome antidote for the after lunch lull.

Live long and prosper: surviving together and looking forward in challenging times. Paul Jeorrett, Glyndwr University

Workshop highlights on day two included Brunel’s presentation on their quest for Customer Services Excellence. Key ideas included thinking about perception and ownership of CSE, “making a good day a great day” and St Andrew’s use of a polling box using table tennis balls for library feedback.

Developing a social media policy for small libraries by Georgina Cronin and Meg Westbury was equally engaging. Key ideas included: humanises the library, helps maintain the brand and instantaneous promotion.

Day three:

Fiona Courage from the University of Sussex started off the day with a fascinating talk on the establishment of The Keep, archive library. The project aim was to create a single building for archival collections of three institutions, University of Sussex, Brighton & Hove Council, and East Sussex County Council.

This allowed for fewer, bigger and better archives to provide storage and accessibility, increase sustainability and also allowed public services to engage with academics which in turn made collections more accessible to academics.
As Fiona evoked, the biggest benefit was the opportunity for external engagement.

[keep] building: Developing shared spaces and services. Fiona Courage, University of Sussex

Workshop highlights on day two included the University for the Creative Arts’ unique approach to using archive materials for teaching and learning. Their aim was to increase the visibility and accessibility of the collections, which they did by holding an Animation archive day based around their Bob Godfrey collection.

This allowed for collaboration with academics, archivists and learning development staff, removed perceived barriers to archive use and initiated artistic response to the archive material. This artistic response led to the creation of an exhibition with each exhibit containing a QR code to link to the artist’s blog.
A collaborative approach to the use of archives in teaching and learning at an arts university, University for the Creative Arts.

Laura Connaughton from John Paul II Library, National University of Ireland, gave an enlightening talk about their use of KnowAll Enquire tracking software. Benefits included:

- Opportunity to streamline all enquiries into central point
- Ability to measure customer enquiries leading to improved customer experience
- Clarity for library staff
- Gathering metrics to show increased usage of new library
- Ability to publish FAQs to promote self-directed learning.
Final thoughts

To sum up, it was lovely to meet so many delegates with different roles and interests. Not only did it raise my awareness of current issues and challenges in Academic and Research Libraries, but also offered me an opportunity to network and develop my own thinking. It also gave me renewed vigour for chartership and has helped to get my reflective writing on track.

Three words to capture my ARLG 2014 experience: engaging, inspiring, motivating.